



# City of Tempe

MINUTES FOR DESIGN FOCUS GROUP  
MEETING

April 23, 2001  
Pyle Center – Globe Room

\*\*\* REVISED \*\*\*

## REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDING:

Michael Wilson Kelly –Architect  
Jim Roberts –Architect  
Jack Gilmore -Landscape Architect  
Paul Grocoff -Lighting Consultant

Brent Kendle -Architect  
Drew Aquilina -Landscape Architect  
Kevin Moore -Landscape Architect

## STAFF ATTENDING:

Roger Millar, OTAK  
Scot Siegel, OTAK  
Bonnie Richardson

Fred Brittingham  
Arlene Palisoc  
Ryan Levesque

## 1. INTRODUCTION

## 2. KEY ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED IN A REGULATORY UPDATE

- Ordinance was written when communities were moving South and West. Needs have evolved and are changing. Tempe has different regions: South, urban core, Downtown, are areas of concern that should include overlays.
- City needs to formulate a new image of the city now that old vision is changing
  - Study other cities which can become models/guide for designers in Tempe
  - Create images of what city will look like in the future (ex. Mark Vinson – City of Tempe drawings of downtown) to help direct architects
  - Evaluate current ordinance to see if regulations can facilitate “new image”
  - In downtown, document should identify “image” block for block to create districts. Before district image is established, create a vision, and then check what the market is like to see if it can meet the district's vision.
  - Ordinance should be qualitative, i.e. what the space should feel like, the experience at street level, while giving architects freedom to create the “image.”
- There should be more flexibility.
  - Guidelines in the ordinance does not give ability to create new ideas. Problem: flexibility can be difficult to write in an ordinance. There needs to be some set of design criteria.
  - You have to have a statement of intent as opposed to just the rules of the ordinance. If intent is identified by designer to the City, a new standard can be established making way for more flexibility within the process

- Quality staff needs to be present who can be flexible with the regulations as long as the ordinance's intent is made clear
- Design Review Staff and Design Review Board rarely share same vision
  - Both views should be consistent. Staff and the board should brief each other. (Ex. Hayden Ferry Lakeside Project required numerous meetings with staff and board to have both parties share same vision before approval.)
  - Applicants rely on staff to let designer know they are heading right direction, but staff comments may differ from the board. We are counting on staff for direction for projects.
  - Mom and Pop business's going through Design Review get creamed.
  - Unlike other cities, designers feel staff does not help them get through the process – too many conflicts
  - Some feel if designers get the staff involved early enough in the design stage, it is easier to process the project through the city. The more knowledgeable we are on Design Review, the easier the project can move through.
- Ordinance requires “good” projects to obtain numerous variances
  - Variances proof of inflexibility of the ordinance
  - Variances take time and money away from project
  - Redevelopment projects are much more complex, conflicts should be resolved administratively because the ordinance is inflexible at this time.
  - Need to rediscover city's design intent now that vision is changing.
- Suggestion, recommendations, and requirements from other cities.
  - Phoenix has a loose form of this type of process.
  - There are requirements from the ordinance that cannot be deviated from. Then there are recommendations, not requirements to choose from. Then there are suggestions that are used as a guide by staff.

## 2. SPECIFICS STANDARDS IN THE ORDINANCE THAT COMPLICATE GOOD DESIGN

- CPTED
  - Need to reevaluate CPTED's lighting vision and staff's vision for lighting standards in downtown
  - Current lighting standards conflict between what's reasonable and what people really want
  - Photometric calculations/format is difficult to perceive what are acceptable lighting levels
  - Need to take environment into consideration. More light will cause more problems (blind, glare)
  - Standards need to define areas on site that have more problems; CPTED does not differentiate “areas” with different lighting requirements. The Police Department should not set these requirements.
  - CPTED is measuring light that is going to an object rather than light coming from an object. Soft lighting can produce a glow that accomplishes what CPTED is trying to achieve with their high lighting levels. Ex. Black Cat v. White Cat
  - Need to regulate while not holding such a hard line; need more flexibility
    - 10' on center trees conflicting with CPTED lighting standards. Difficult to meet requirements for number of trees and lighting foot candles – delays approvals for permit.

- Suggest system of credits – ex. Allow lower light levels if vegetation around walkways is eliminated; gives feeling of safety without conflicts.
- CPTED lighting regulations structured according to IES recommendations which does not give flexibility. Designers forced to conform with IES for liability.
- Scare tactic used by CPTED staff to conform to their standards; does not give designers ability to solve problems. ex: round v. square columns. CPTED is architecture based on fear.
- CPTED requirements come at last minute of project, making clients do whatever CPTED requires in order to obtain a permit
- Nobody is balancing the "snowball effect" of CPTED.
- CPTED wall heights, fence heights, landscape features give feeling of prison yard
  - 8' walls too tall
  - low seat walls designed by CPTED to be unusable (peaks)
  - Arizona Mill's landscaped retention basin unusable because area is secured
  - CPTED requirement of 50% of all river rock of it cemented excessive.
- Existing design criteria
  - Street tree requirement not interesting; not good landscaping design for entire street corridor.
  - Quantities of trees (10'-15' o.c.) too much. Certain types of trees need more appropriate spacing to develop. Suggest combining landscape requirements with adjacent properties
  - Design Review does not require contextual process/review. Projects become isolated. Suggest giving credit to projects if working contextually. (ex. City of Scottsdale's contextual process for Design Review)
  - Suggest allowing minimal design criteria to be considered.
  - Landscaping in PADs – PADs give flexibility in site design; should also give flexibility in landscape design
- Standards getting in the way of pedestrian oriented environments
  - ADA requirement creates conflicts/problems with design; need to do things that are not set standards
  - Need to blur standards between private and public property in downtown areas; more flexibility
  - Downtown is pedestrian oriented, the rest of Tempe is designed for cars. Streets need to be designed from pedestrian, car, and bus/rail point of view.
  - Streets seem to be designed by Engineers. Streets/sidewalks need to create pedestrian environment using landscaping to enhance safety while making it visually pleasing. (Improving the buffering of sidewalks and street with landscaping not allowed by CPTED).
  - Alleys are becoming forgotten areas. Should be designed to connect adjacent neighborhoods at a human scale. The alley can be very contributing on a pedestrian level. CPTED says nothing good ever happens in an alley. Some incentive to integrate improvements to streetscape would be encouraged.

### 3. OTHER ISSUES:

- Ordinance – can't have a "one size fit all" project
- The property vs. the curb line, should the project be allowed to work with the pedestrian connection.
- Downtown land uses – residential criteria from multifamily quality rating does not work; is not valuable information. Ex. Split faced block = 10 points.
- Suggest putting signage review within own regulated body, not incorporated with Design Review.

- Need to take Design Review's personal taste out of the review process. Projects should address/judge projects without personal judgment or harm to public.
- Criteria should be challenging to the imagination
- Stamped notes on plans (i.e. all signs require separate permit) too redundant
- Enforcement should be done by the architect
- City should not require certain comments to be placed on specific drawings which make other people liable. Ex. Note saying "meets ADA requirements" on irrigation plans.
- Design Review process should review conceptual drawings at that stage and not require construction drawing. Too much detail required up front. Design Review needs to have faith in the concept. Must realize design evolves and changes up to the end if you want a good design.
- Need to educate the Design Review Board on entire process. Give consistent messages.